

'IS THE TARIFF A ROBBERY?'

[Extract from remarks of Hon. J. P. Jones, of Nevada, in the Senate of the United States, September 10, 1890, and printed in the Congressional Record.]

The free traders and revenue reformers assert that tariff is a "robbery."

Can it be a "robbery" of any one to secure to the people of this country the opportunity to supply our National wants by the hands of our own countrymen? That is all that the highest conceivable tariff can secure.

In times of armed conflict our citizens are required to leave their homes and families to take up arms, and at the risk of their lives defend the country against armed invasion. Why should not the country in time of peace protect the labor of those men from an industrial invasion no less destructive?

If the tariff be a "robbery," it is the first to be observed that all classes of people, the robbed as well as the robbing, are better fed, better clothed, and better housed than the people of any other country in the world. That is the crucial test of economical policies.

It is undeniable that the most perfect suiting of occupations to the various aptitudes of all the members of the community will be produced by the carrying on of the largest variety of industries.

Is it not then the duty of a country to maintain such industrial policy as will secure the greatest possible extent and variety of production, leaving to the natural competition between individuals the function of preventing the undue profits on the part of any? There are 23,000,000 of active workers in this country. Among that large number the contests and competition of those engaged in the same business may be relied on to adjust prices so that none can make a profit greater than the average profit of the community.

But let us see whether there is any robbery effected by the tariff.

As to such portion of the money collected as is paid to the Government, that goes into the public treasury and aids in defraying the expenses of the Nation. Inasmuch as all the people share in the benefits, that portion cannot be considered "robbery."

It will hardly do to assert that the foreign manufacturer is "robbed" by our requiring him to deposit in our Treasury a sum of money in the nature of a license-fee for the privilege of selling his wares in this country.

The "rob" therefore must consist of the difference between a reasonable price and the price now charged by the manufacturer. If such difference exists, it must constitute a margin so ample as to become a strong incentive to the people of any section claiming to be robbed by it to organize for themselves competing establishments and thus wholly protect themselves against the exaction of the robber. The tariff protects them against the foreigner, and all that is needed to protect them against the native robber is for themselves to do the work—to produce the article. Why do they not produce it? If they have not the skill they can employ it. There is ample skill in this country ready to go wherever sufficient inducement is offered.

The law operating equally and impartially on all sections of the Union, the people of any section claiming to be robbed, yet refusing or neglecting to set up establishments for the manufacture of the article through which the robbery is effected, confess, by such refusal or negligence, that notwithstanding their complaint, they get the article for less than they are willing to produce it for themselves. If through the adoption of sinister policies the domestic manufacturers should be driven out of business, then both they and those who now complain of robbery would be equally helpless against the exactions of the foreign manufacturer, who, the field being all his own, would continue, and, at will, enlarge upon the "robbery." If the "rob" is not sufficient to induce competition on the part of those who claim to suffer by it, it can not be very great—it can not exist at all except in the imaginations of those who believe that the exigencies of a political party are more to be consulted than the interests of the country.

Under keen competition in all industries, how can any one be robbed? In order that we may arrive at some idea of the possibility of robbery by our manufacturers, let us inquire as to the character of the competition existing.

As the census figures for this year are not yet available, the figures at command apply to a population not of 65,000,000, but 50,000,000. I do not doubt that they are 40 per cent. greater now than in 1880, but I will take them as they then stood.

According to the census of 1880 there were 17,972 boot and shoe factories in the United States. Has anybody in this country, then, a monopoly

in the making of boots and shoes? With the keen competition maintained by nearly eighteen thousand establishments, it is likely that purchasers of boots and shoes can be "robbed?" It is probable the number of establishments is now twenty-five thousand. No one of these establishments, if it would get trade and keep it, can charge more for boots than its competitors charge.

The census of 1880 also shows that we had 3,841 carriage and wagon factories. Is not that number enough to afford the purchaser of carriages and wagons ample protection against over-charge, against "robbery?"

We had 1,943 manufactories at agricultural implements. This is an average of fifty such factories for each State in the Union. Is it at all probable that with active competition for business among so many establishments any one of them could succeed for any length of time in "robbing" its customers?

We had 1,005 cotton factories, working 230,223 looms and 10,921,147 spindles. Is that number not enough to maintain sufficient competition in the manufacture of cotton goods?

We had 4,558 machine shops. Is not this number enough to maintain sufficient competition in the manufacture of cotton goods?

We had 4,598 machine shops. Is not this number enough to keep up a fair competition in the production and price of machinery?

We had 6,008 factories of furniture and upholstery. Surely that number of competitors should make it impossible for any one of these factories to make more than a fair average profit in the making of furniture and upholstery. Surely that number of competitors should make it impossible for any one of these factories to make more than a fair average profit in the making of furniture.

We had 1,005 separate establishments for the making of iron and steel. Considering the intensity of the competition in that business and the large amount of capital employed (which in 1880 was \$230,000,000) the efforts of each establishment to get business, as against its competitors, render it certain that the profits of the business must bear a normal ratio to the general range of profits throughout the country.

Where competition is free among so vast a population as ours there can be no robbery in a tariff, no matter how high.

AMERICAN WAGE EARNERS

"A MAN EARNS DOUBLE AS MUCH IN AMERICA AS IN ENGLAND."

[Extract from remarks of Hon. Wm. D. Owen, of Indiana, page 5547 of Daily Congressional Record, 50th Congress, 1st Session.]

A man earns double as much in America as in England and the purchasing power of a dollar is very nearly equal. The total cost of supplies for a family in America is about 5 per cent. more than in England. The official statistics show that the price of ordinary family supplies are not more than 5 per cent. in the excess here. Now, you do not comfort a worker greatly to tell him that if he will vote for you he can buy for 95 cents for what now costs him a dollar, especially if you "tell the truth" that at the same time instead of getting a dollar for a day's work he will get 50 cents. He is too good at figures to surrender 50 cents in order to save 5 cents. Now, this 5 per cent. more than a man's family costs him here than in England can be paid for the entire year by the extra American wages he receives in two weeks. That is, in two weeks' work the amount of wages he receives above what he would get in England pays the 5 per cent. extra expenses for one year. For the other fifty weeks in the year he can save his extra wages and still furnish his family the same things that it would require the whole of his wages to supply if he lived in England. In other words, if the families lived just the same, the American wage-worker will at the end of the year have fifty weeks of the extra American wages in his pocket. The English workman will not have a dollar.

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THE NEW TAX LAWS

WHAT THEIR PURPOSE IS AND WHAT THEY WILL ACCOMPLISH—ALL THE STATUTES RECENTLY ENACTED BY THE SPECIAL SESSION CLEARLY EXPLAINED

AND THE GREAT BENEFIT THEY WILL BRING SET FORTH CLEARLY AND DISTINCTLY—VOTERS, READ THIS.

[From the Parkersburg State Journal.]

The twenty-one tax laws passed at the special session of the Legislature of 104 have been published and widely distributed. The acts cover 155 printed pages and as they appertain to the entire system of collection, assessment and disbursement of revenue, are of the utmost importance and far reaching in their effect. They mark a decided step forward toward a fairer and more just system of assessment and lower rates of taxation and their merits need only to be fairly considered and fully understood to meet with general approval.

What the Acts Are in Brief.

In brief, they reduce the State tax rate from thirty-five cents to five cents on the hundred dollars by 1907; increase certain license taxes and create new ones, thereby raising a large amount of new revenue for the State from these sources; reduce the maximum county levy to sixty cents instead of the present limit of ninety-five cents; limit the maximum levy for the regular school "building fund" to twenty cents instead of forty; making a total reduction of 85 cents in a total of \$1.70 or ONE-HALF; prohibit unauthorized expenditures by any officer of the State, county courts or boards of education; require the counties having special Criminal Courts to pay the salaries of the Judges; provide for a Tax Commissioner, who becomes the head of the tax assessment system of the State; create a better system of assessor and assessments, much of which in regard to the duties of the assessors goes into effect in 1909; provide for a re-assessment of all the real estate of the State in 1905, under the direction of the Tax Commissioner, by commissioners appointed by him, the valuation being subject to review and correction by the County Courts and by the State Board of Public Works, as an equalization board; make the first tax levies in the new values or appraisement of real estate apply in 1906; provide for assessments of pipe lines, telegraph lines, telephone lines, car lines, railroads, etc., annually by the Board of Public Works, requiring complete and accurate sworn returns of the true and actual values of the property from these corporations; increase and perfect the collateral inheritance tax; change the method of conveying prisoners to the penitentiary, saving thousands of dollars annually; fix the fees to be charged, adding new ones and raising old ones in the offices of Secretary of State and Auditor, which are to go to the State hereafter as new revenue; require that the regularly elected assessors of the counties beginning in 1909, shall thereafter annually assess the real estate as well as all other property, the special re-assessment of real estate of 1905 holding until that time; provide that corporate and all other property shall be returned for taxation at its true or actual value; require counties to pay \$50.00 a year toward the education and support of their reform school inmates and those in the W. Va. Asylum (formerly called the Home for Incurables); and a number of minor matters of more or less importance.

The general scope of these bills is to perfect the taxation assessment system and give it a head and to cause all property to be valued as the constitution contemplates, at its real value, in order that there may be (1) uniformity and honesty in valuations of similar property; that (2) the rates of local taxation be greatly reduced; that (3) direct State taxes may be wiped out as far as possible, and the needed State revenues raised otherwise.

Our present system of unequal and low values with high taxes is fatally defective. The object of the new laws is to put corporate and all property on the same equal footing, to assess all property at its value, equally and uniformly, and then to reduce State, county and municipal taxes.

It will take no more money to run local and State governments under one system than another. A full tax valuation therefore means low taxes. The keynote of the bills is "fairer valuations and lower taxation." With lower taxation invisible personal property will more largely appear on the tax duplicates. The State revenues are to be raised from license and privilege taxes, inheritance taxes, etc.

A study of the bills in detail will give a clearer idea of their scope and value.

General License Act.

The general license law (chapter three of the Acts) covers thirty pages. It raises the retail liquor license from \$850.00 to \$450.00. The tax on distil-

leries other than fruit and brandy, for selling in this State, whether the distillery is in or out of the State, is \$500.00; the "manufacturing" license for all kind of distilleries is \$100.00. On breweries the manufacturer's tax is \$100.00 and the "selling" license tax is gauged according to the capacity of the brewery of ten thousand barrels capacity up to \$6,000.00 tax for a brewery of 100,000 barrels capacity. And, as in the case of distilleries, this selling tax applies to breweries, whether located in or out of this State.

The revenue feature of the bill is very attractive. Heretofore the total license taxes derived from breweries and distilleries have been less than \$5,000.00. It is estimated that they will under this act reach fully \$100,000.00. The stock brokers' license is \$50.00 and for conducting a bucket shop \$500.00; for sale of tobacco in any form, other than cigarettes, \$5.00; with cigarettes \$10.00; junk dealers will have to pay \$25.00; to sell trading stamps the tax is \$500.00; to maintain or occupy a houseboat \$10.00; to maintain a slot machine, other than gambling devices, \$5.00; to sell at wholesale revolvers, pistols, slung shots, etc., \$300.00 and at retail \$100.00; pawn brokers \$100.00.

There are many other license taxes. The new license taxes are included among those enumerated above. The law it is believed will raise in new revenue as much money as a 12 or 15 cent direct tax levy would raise. (Other laws raise additional new revenues.)

State Taxes Reduced.

The important feature of this act, however, is the fact that it reduces our present direct State taxes of 35 cents on the \$100 by eleven cents in 1905, and an additional eleven cents in 1906 and an additional eight cents in 1907, leaving only a direct State tax of five cents after 1907, which shall be devoted to the public schools. It will thus be seen that the Legislature has provided for wiping out six-sevenths of the direct taxes of the State inside of the next three years. This of itself is a magnificent achievement.

The proposed constitutional amendment, permitting the total abolition of all direct State taxes, was defeated by the Democrats, including Senator CORNWELL, the Democratic candidate for governor. This measure required a two-thirds vote, and as the Republicans did not command a majority of the House they were unable to pass it over the solid Democratic opposition. Every Republican in the Legislature voted for the measure, and they were unanimous, apparently, in their desire to eventually abolish all State taxes. Not being able to do this the Legislature did the next best thing. After 1906 the State taxes are only five cents which is to be devoted exclusively for the State school purposes until such time as the constitution is amended and thus permit all direct State taxes to be abolished.

Assessment of Taxes.

The act (chapter four) relating to the assessment of taxes and also to create the office of Tax Commissioner, is the longest, as well as the most important one. It occupies sixty-six pages and revises the entire system of laws in regard to the assessment of taxes. It provides for a better system of assessors and assessments. The office of Tax Commissioner, which is created, is an exceedingly important step and creates for the first time in the State's history a head to the tax levying and tax collecting system of the State. This office is destined to be one of the most important offices in the State, and will amply justify the wisdom of the Legislature in creating it. The appointment of the Tax Commissioner is for the governor for six years, and he is ineligible to reappointment.

All property, real and personal, must hereafter be assessed at its actual value. After 1909 the real estate shall be assessed annually by the county assessor. The assessor collects the poll or capitation tax. He is supposed to do this at the time he obtains the list from the taxpayer. He has the same right to distrain for this tax that the sheriff has. In case the assessor does not collect it and the sheriff should subsequently collect it, the assessor must pay a commission to the sheriff for so doing. It is estimated that the State will derive from this fund alone from forty to sixty thousand dollars in excess of what it has heretofore collected. Railroad, car line, telephone, telegraph and pipe line companies will be assessed at their actual value by the Board of Public Works, to which they must make their return hereafter. (Only railroads have reported hitherto.) Banks are required to return for taxation their capital stock, surplus and undivided profits, after deducting real estate and such other exemptions as may be authorized by law; or they may elect to have the shares of stock assessed to the owner thereof, in which event the shares shall be assessed at their market value, and the bank must pay the taxes and recover the amount paid

(Continued on Third Page.)



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